

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subjected matter contained therein. New claim 27 has been added and other claims previously dependent on claim 1 have been amended to be dependent on claim 27.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claim 20 has been amended to recite a central control unit configured to couple to input and output connections of at least two medically applicable instruments via at least two control apparatuses having different manufacturer-specific command protocols and associated command protocol software. The central control unit is configured to receive output signals and relay received input signals without conversion the received input signals into the command protocols of the least two medically applicable apparatuses.

Novak has not been found to disclose, in a manner like that recited in claim 20, a central control unit that is configured to couple to input and output connections of medical devices via at least two control apparatuses, where the central control unit is configured to receive output signals and relay received input signals without conversion the received input signals into the command protocols of the least two medically applicable apparatuses.

Rather, Novak is understood to disclose a system that creates and displays a replica faceplate of a control interface and uses input received through the control replica faceplate to control associated medical devices. Rather than simply relaying received inputs to the control apparatuses, Novak's system transforms the inputs into command signals and converts the controller command protocol into first and second control protocols associated with the control interfaces for the medical devices. In essence, Novak is understood to require conversion of received input signals into command protocols associated with the devices (see, e.g., col. 4, lines 21-25). Novak also has been found to require downloading of command protocols to allow for conversion into command protocols (see, e.g., col. 7, lines 17-31).

Unlike Novak's system, the invention recited in claim 20 allows for the relay of received input to control apparatuses associated with different medical instruments

without having to convert the received input into various command protocols associated with the medical devices, and without having to determine or download any special protocol for the manufacturer of the given control apparatus.

As such, the claimed invention provides a simpler and more cost-effective solution in which input and output signals are exchanged between the central control unit and the respective control apparatuses without download and modification of the command protocols and without direct control of the medical devices coupled to the respective control apparatuses.

For at least these reasons, the rejection of claim 20 and dependent claim 22 should be withdrawn.

Claim 24 has been amended to recite a central interface unit coupled to input and output connections of at least two control apparatuses, wherein the central interface unit includes at least one processor that is configured to convert different manufacturer-specific display information and/or image formats from the control apparatuses into a predetermined, defined image format for display on a common output display device, wherein the central interface unit is configured to provide selective display of output data from the different medically applicable apparatuses alone or in combination on the common output display device.

Novak has not been found to disclose, in a manner like that recited in claim 24, a central interface unit that is configured to convert different manufacturer-specific display information and/or image formats from control apparatuses into a predetermined, defined image format for display on a common output display device, wherein the central interface unit is configured to provide selective display of output data from the different medically applicable apparatuses alone or in combination on the common output display device.

Rather, Novak is understood to disclose a system that creates and displays a replica faceplate of control interfaces for medical devices and converts received input into commands for controlling associated medical devices. Novak's system, as understood, requires the download and conversion of various controller command protocols (see, e.g., col. 4, lines 21-25, and col. 7, lines 17-31) to display a replica control faceplate for each medical device.

The claimed invention provides a simpler and more cost-effective solution to integrating different medical devices in which output signals associated with the medical

devices are converted into a unified display format and displayed alone or in combination on a common output display device.

For at least these reasons, the rejection of claim 24 and dependent claim 25 should be withdrawn.

New claim 27 recites a central control unit configured to couple to input and output connections of at least two medically applicable instruments via at least two control apparatuses having different manufacturer-specific command protocols and associated command protocol software. The central control unit is configured to receive input signals from an input device and forward the received input signals to the at least two control apparatuses without controlling the medically applicable apparatuses.

Novak has not been found to disclose the claimed central control unit that is configured to receive input signals from an input device and forward the received input signals to at least two control apparatuses without controlling the associated medically applicable apparatuses. Rather, Novak is understood to disclose a system that creates and displays a replica faceplate of a control interface and uses input received through the control replica faceplate to control associated medical devices. In addition, Novak's system transforms the inputs into command signals and converts the controller command protocol into first and second control protocols associated with the control interfaces for the medical devices to control the medical devices.

In essence, Novak creates a replica and actually uses input entered through the replica faceplate to actually control the different medical devices. Unlike Novak, the invention recited in claim 27, allows for the interaction with and control of different medical instruments without having to rewrite or interface with the software used in the control apparatus, and without having to predetermine a special protocol for the manufacturer of the given control apparatus.

As such, the claimed invention provides a simpler and more cost-effective solution in which input and output signals are exchanged between the central control unit and the respective control apparatuses without download and modification of the command protocols and without direct control of the medical devices coupled to the respective control apparatuses.

For at least these reasons, claim 27 and dependent claims 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 26 and 28 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Telephone Interview

In the interests of advancing this application to issue and compact prosecution, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned to discuss any of the foregoing with which there may be some controversy or confusion or to make any suggestions that the Examiner may have to place the application in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

By /Jason A Worgull/

Jason A. Worgull, Reg. No. 48,044

1621 Euclid Avenue
Nineteenth Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 621-1113